

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated March 19, 2007, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the following remarks. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Claim 28 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being unpatentable over Dolan. This rejection is traversed for the following reasons.

Claim 28 recites "priority caller information comprising a priority caller number and a priority caller code, the priority code comprising an instruction for executing a priority action for processing an incoming communication." Dolan fails to teach this feature. Dolan uses the caller phone number to determine the priority of the call as described in column 5, lines 5-28. Dolan does not teach using a priority code as recited in claim 28. Dolan makes reference to a "touch tone ID" from a caller, but does not suggest that this touch tone ID actually identifies a priority of the caller or even identifies the caller. The Examiner cannot consider the broad reference to a "touch tone ID" to correspond to the claimed "priority code" as there is no teaching in Dolan of what the touch tone ID represents or how it is used. Thus, Dolan fails to teach all the elements of claim 28.

For at least the above reasons, claim 28 is patentable over Dolan.

Claims 1-8, 11-18, 23-25 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Dolan in view of Hoopes. This rejection is traversed for the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites "a priority response comprising an action to ring a telephone associated with the telephone line with an alert signal that is different from a regular ringing tone." In applying Dolan, the Examiner acknowledges that Dolan fails to teach this feature and relies on Hoopes for teaching a priority alert ring. Applicants submit that it would not have been obvious to include a priority alert signal in the system of Dolan.

Figure 11 of Dolan describes how a subscriber handles a call based on caller priorities (column 5, lines 55-67). As shown in Figure 11, the incoming call is answered only if the caller's priority is sufficient. If the caller's priority is sufficient, the called party subscriber is alerted to the call and makes a decision about how to handle the call. In receiving an incoming call in Dolan, the system determines if the caller has sufficient priority prior to

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notifying the subscriber. Thus, there is no need for a "priority alert ring" in Dolan as all calls connected to the subscriber have already been screened to determine if the caller has sufficient priority. A priority alert ring is not needed in Dolan as the priority decision has already been made before the call is routed to the subscriber. A priority alert ring would be redundant and unnecessary in Dolan as callers lacking the requisite priority are not connected to the subscriber. In Dolan, all connected calls have the requisite priority, and thus a priority alert ring is not needed. Therefore, there is no motivation to use a priority alert ring in Dolan. Accordingly, there is insufficient motivation to combine Dolan and Hoopes as proposed by the Examiner.

For at least the above reasons, claim 1 is patentable over Dolan in view of Hoopes. Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1 and are patentable over Dolan in view of Hoopes for at least the reasons advanced with reference to claim 1. Claims 11-18, 21, 23-25 and 29 recite an alert signal for priority calls similar to that recited in claim 1 and are patentable over Dolan in view of Hoopes for at least the reasons advanced with reference to claim 1.

Furthermore, claims 4 and 21 recite receiving a priority code from the caller. There is no priority code in Dolan. Dolan uses the caller phone number to determine the priority of the call as described in column 5, lines 5-28. Dolan does not teach using a priority code as recited in claims 4 and 21. Dolan makes reference to a "touch tone ID" from a caller, but does not suggest that this touch tone ID actually identifies a priority of the caller or even identifies the caller. The Examiner cannot consider the broad reference to a "touch tone ID" to correspond to the claimed "priority code" as there is no teaching in Dolan of what the touch tone ID represents or how it is used. Hoopes is silent as to the use of a priority code. Neither Dolan nor Hoopes teaches the elements of claims 4 and 21. Thus, claims 4 and 21 are patentable over Dolan in view of Hoopes.

Furthermore, claim 13 recites prompting the calling party to input calling party priority information used to process the call. There is no priority information input by the caller in Dolan. Dolan uses the caller phone number to determine the priority of the call as described in column 5, lines 5-28. Dolan does not teach using input priority information as recited in claim 13. Dolan makes reference to a "touch tone ID" from a caller, but does not suggest that this touch tone ID actually identifies a priority of the caller or even identifies the

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caller. The Examiner cannot consider the broad reference to a "touch tone ID" to correspond to the claimed "priority information" as there is no teaching in Dolan of what the touch tone ID represents or how it is used. Hoopes is silent as to the use of a priority information. Neither Dolan nor Hoopes teaches the elements of claim 13. Thus, claim 13 is patentable over Dolan in view of Hoopes.

Claims 9-10, 19-20 and 26-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Dolan in view of Hoopes and Taylor. This rejection is traversed for the following reasons. Taylor was relied upon for allegedly disclosing TCP/IP and VoIP telephony, but fails to cure the deficiencies of Dolan in view of Hoopes discussed above with reference to claims 1, 14 and 21. Taylor does not teach the use of an alert signal for priority calls. Claims 9-10 depend from claim 1, claims 19-20 depend from claim 14 and claims 26-27 depend from claim 21 and are patentable over Dolan in view of Hoopes and Taylor for at least the reasons advance with reference to claims 1, 14 and 21.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that the above-identified application is now in condition for allowance. Early notification to this effect is respectfully requested.

If there are any charges with respect to this response or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

David A. Fox
Registration No. 38,807
CANTOR COLBURN LLP
55 Griffin Road South
Bloomfield, CT 06002
Telephone (860) 286-2929
Facsimile (860) 286-0115
Customer No. 36192

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